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میان غرب و جنوب باغ حوض ده درو سی است اطراف تمام
 درختهای نارنج است و درختهای نارسم است که در حوض تمام
 سبز کنه را راست جای عین باغ عینیت در وقت زرد شدن
 نارنجها بسیار خوب می نماید خیلی باغ خیلی طرح شده و طر



عمل دسوی

A miniature depicting the laying out of the *Bagh-i-Wafa* (Fidelity Garden) in Jalalabad (see p. 26)

BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE PEACE, SOLIDARITY AND
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Optimism is inherent in youth



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Nuclear Disarmament Prospects

A well-represented international meeting for nuclear weapon-free zones was held on 20—22 June, 1988, in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic. The meeting was attended by 1,034 participants from 113 countries, representing various political parties, socio-political organizations and peace movements.

This testifies to the growing realization of the imperative need to ward off the danger of a nuclear holocaust that looms large over mankind today. The broad and high-level representation of different liberation movements, countries and continents at the Berlin meeting, which was indeed the first of its kind in human history, speaks of the readiness of the forces of goodwill to form a broad coalition for peace, transcending political, ideological and other barriers.

Another important and exceptional feature, which invited the attention of the participants and observers of the Berlin meeting, was its timing and venue.

The meeting, convened right after the conclusion of the fourth successful Soviet-American Summit, was influenced and inspired to a large extent by the new and optimistic political climate in the world. Thus, besides highlighting the importance of the INF Treaty on the elimination of Soviet and American medium and shorter-

range nuclear missiles (which heralded the process of nuclear disarmament), the participants reiterated their resolve to undertake concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament.

The understanding reached between the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Social Democratic Party of West Germany on the creation in Central Europe of a corridor, free of nuclear and chemical weapons evoked deep interest among the participants. They pointed out that the realization of the GDR proposal, set forth at the Berlin meeting on the creation of a hot-line between Berlin, Prague and Bonn, can de-escalate tension and the danger of a deliberate or accidental nuclear war at the dividing line between Warsaw and NATO alliances.

The Berlin meeting, apart from seeking practical ways and means to step up the process of establishing nuclear-free zones, corridors and regions, stated that the removal of regional conflicts and hotbeds of tension can deliver mankind from the danger of a nuclear holocaust. The third commission, dealing with the subject, pointed out that the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan have set before the world practical example for the solution of sanguinary and protracted regional conflicts through peaceful means and dialogue.

The idea of creating nuclear-free zones, which has already been put into practice in Latin America and South Pacific, is not a Utopian vision. But, as the participants of the meeting rightly stressed, proceeding along such a road requires persistence, courage and patience from all the sides concerned.

In the present complicated international situation, when the dark clouds of a nuclear inferno loom over the planet, no task is more pressing than warding off such a danger which threatens the very existence of mankind. The three-day long deliberations of the Berlin meeting revealed that tangible progress has been made towards the creation of a world void of the means of mass destruction and violence. It presupposes the monolithic unity of action and will of all the sane forces, guided by political realism and a rational approach.

Basharat



International meeting on Nuclear Free Zones held in Berlin

Afghan-Finnish Friendship Develops

The Peace, Solidarity and Friendship Organization of Afghanistan (PSFO) has established ties with over 70 national and international organizations the world over. Though the origin of friendly relations between Afghanistan and Finland goes back to the decade of independence (1919—1929), Afghan-Finnish friendship has been given a new impetus in the recent years.

"In 1928 the first friendship treaty was signed between Afghanistan and Finland reaffirming the friendly relations between the two countries. Sixty years have elapsed since then. These friendly relations are intact today," said J. Henttonen, Chairman of the Finnish-Afghan Friendship Asso-

ciation (FAFA) in a talk with our correspondent. Henttonen, heading a Finnish delegation, visited Afghanistan on the invitation of Afghan-Finnish Friendship Association of Afghanistan (AFFA) in June 1988.

Asked about the highlights of the current visit of the Finnish delegation to Afghanistan, Henttonen, a civil engineer who had worked in Kabul earlier as a UNDP specialist, said:

"It is not the first visit of a Finnish friendship delegation here. Several Afghan delegations have also visited Finland in the past. Recently, Mr. Jalal, Minister of Commerce who is also Chairman of the Afghan-Finnish Friendship Association, visited Finland. During this visit we met leaders of the Peace, Solidarity and Friendship Organization, attended the meeting of the AFFA Presidium and adopted a work plan for activities of our respective associations for the years 1988—1989. Also we signed protocols on further cooperation, especially in cultural and commercial spheres. During our stay we visited a Soviet military camp and talked to their senior officers. But, I think, the most interesting part of our trip was going around the city meeting your people face to face.

"In short, this trip greatly contributed to the expansion of relations between our peoples and organizations.

"What is more, we do not any longer depend on the information emanating from Peshawar or western mass

media. These bilateral visits have greatly contributed in re-shaping Finnish public opinion about Afghanistan. The Finnish people are increasingly becoming interested in the developments in your country."

In response to a question on the prospects of trade with Finland, the head of the Finnish delegation noted: "Obviously Afghan carpets are famous everywhere, and in Finland too. "Undoubtedly, Afghan products are in great demand in Finland. Finnish products can also find acceptance in Afghanistan. When Mr. Jalal visited Finland, we seriously discussed expansion of bilateral trade relations between our two countries. Soon this exchange will begin. Paper and milk will be imported from Finland. In exchange, minerals will be exported to Finland."

As for assistance to Afghanistan in handling the re-settlement of Afghan emigrants and rehabilitation of rural areas, he stated that currently Finland is helping Afghanistan within the framework of international organizations like the UN Emergency Relief Fund. Among the 50 UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan staff members there are five Finnish citizens including the head of the mission.

At the end Mr. Henttonen expressed great optimism over expansion of friendly relations and cooperation between Finland and Afghanistan to the benefit of the peoples of the two countries and world peace.

Bakwa



Members of the AFFA Presidium with the Finnish delegation visiting Kabul

RECONCILIATION

Heaven for Returnees

Repatriates receive free medicines as well

Among the large centres that welcome repatriates is Kabul peace guest house. The three-storeyed building of the guest house, adjacent to Jangalak factory, has bedrooms, dining-halls, TV and cinema hall, health clinic, laboratory, drug store and other amenities. The guest house began functioning after the proclamation of the national reconciliation policy. It can generally accommodate 700 persons. More than this number can also be accommodated if need arises. The house had received, till 4 July, 1988, over 3,850 persons who had returned from Iran, Pakistan, Qatar, Egypt, France, USA and India. They have stayed here from three to five days on an average, before they could return to their native towns and villages.

Visiting the house, the correspondent of our magazine met a group of repatriates who had arrived there on July 2, 1988 along with their families. Amir Khan, an old man, said: "As soon as we arrived at the border, we were warmly welcomed by the Afghan authorities, taken to the peace guest house of Jalalabad and then brought to Kabul. Contrary to the



provisions of Geneva agreements, authorities in Pakistan create obstacles in the way of return of refugees. In order to avoid conflicts with the Pakistani authorities and any confrontation with Afghan extremists, we entered the country secretly." Amir Khan, a resident of Kunduz province who had lived for two years in Pakistan, described the living conditions in refugee camps as humiliating and the behaviour of Pakistani authorities as inhuman. Amir Khan stressed that Afghan refugees want to come back home, particularly after the proclamation of the policy of national reconciliation and the concessions offered by the people's power. But the Pakistani government hinders this process. He added that, *Insha Allah*, all the Afghans finally return home.

Another repatriate confirmed what Amir Khan had said about the miserable living conditions in refugee camps and recounted his sufferings there.

Ibrahim, 35, another repatriate from Iran, said that he had come secretly via Islam Qala border to Herat. Speaking of the poverty and condi-

tions of Afghan refugees in Iran and the attitude of Iranian *Pasdarans* (Guards of Iranian Revolution), he said that any Afghan who does not have a card is fined and expelled from Iran. Such a person would be brought to a desert and left there to die, or to find his way to Afghanistan.

Amir Mohammad, a 15-year old youth who had returned with his family from Iran, said: "I am impatient to arrive at my native place, Kunduz, and resume farming. I want to enrol myself in a literacy course as well."

All the repatriates in Kabul city peace guest house appreciated the assistance and facilities provided to them by the government and extolled the behaviour of Afghan authorities.

R. Yusufzai

"There is no place like HOME!"

Peace and freedom are the most precious gifts a human being is blessed with. It is only under peaceful conditions that one can create beauty, and lead a decent and happy life.

Based on these principles, the party and the State of Afghanistan initiated the national reconciliation policy as the only alternative to the war still going on in the country, so that no child shall cry over the loss of his father and no mother be in agony at losing her sons.

The national reconciliation policy opened up new vistas for our people, especially among those Afghans who had left the country misled by the enemy propaganda.

Our correspondent Farid interviewed two young repatriates — Hadi

Kabul Guest House



Repatriates being interviewed by our reporter



and his brother Ahmad Shah who have returned from Iran after 4 years of emigration. Both the brothers are now students of Kabul University. Hadi tells us how it all began:

"I was a student in one of the high schools in Kabul. Due to some personal reasons I and my brother left the country in 1984 and went to Iran. These four years abroad brought us nothing but untold suffering and sorrow.

"There is nothing good or pleasant in being away from home. Each moment is filled with humiliation, which no one can forget. I remember, especially in the first year of emigration, when I was 19 years old and I worked in a cloth shop on a meagre salary. It was enough for bare survival. That year in winter we suffered a lot, sleeping in a freezing shack. We had no money to buy coal. During those nights I didn't know whether we fell asleep, if at all.

"We felt home-sick all the time, and wished to be back. These wishes came true with the proclamation of the national reconciliation policy on Jan. 15, 1987. We knew that there would be a lot of trouble till we reached the border. But the news from home made us confident that, on our return, we would be really welcomed, and not punished or discriminated.

"We received letters from those who had been repatriated earlier. Also we got letters from those friends who had been in Pulicharkhi prison and had been pardoned under the National Reconciliation Decree. In these letters they said that in the peace guest house of Herat extensive facilities have been provided for the repatriates, that upon our arrival we would be transported free to Kabul and get back to school. Thus, in spite of the obstacles put in our way, in March 1987 we decided to get back home through Islam Qala border port. We came together with 300 other Afghan emigrants from Iran.

"Upon our arrival we, once again, saw the blue sky, the snow-covered mountains of the homeland, and drank the clear, fresh water coming from its peaks. We thanked God for this blessing. It is not easy to describe in words the moment when one sets foot on one's native soil. Only the hearts of repatriates can feel the depth of joy of breathing once again the air of the homeland."

Answering a question about the services rendered to them upon arrival, Hadi said, "We were welcomed right at the border by the party and State representatives. Then we were transported to Herat Peace Guest House. A few days later, we were taken to Kabul by Ariana Airlines. Never before in my life had I felt so happy as in those days of my return to Kabul. After long years of separation, I once again visited my friends and



Ahamad Shah and Hadi

relatives, most of whom I thought would have been killed. Meeting old friends and relatives made me forget all the hardships and unpleasant memories."

Asked about the problems they have at school now, Hadi and his brother noted that it takes a while to get re-adjusted, especially with school programmes.

Then we asked the two young men if they have any message for other Afghan emigrants. This is what they said, "Many Afghan emigrants want to return home from Iran. But they cannot do this officially. The Iranian guards simply do not allow them to return to Afghanistan. They have to take enormous risks, which is not easy. One may lose not only one's belongings but also one's life in taking this chance.

"Our message is that all those emigrants who want to return should take some joint action — either through UN agencies or other volun-

tary organizations. Inside Afghanistan all possible facilities have been provided for repatriates from the moment they cross the borders till they find a job and get resettled, especially now that the Geneva accords have provided vast legal and international opportunities for their voluntary return. We think that the homeland is like a mother who loves her children and takes care of them. But there are times when mothers need their sons to take care of them. May be this is high time to be where we belong. Isn't it?"

Facts and Figures

Returned since Jan. 1987	140,000
Guest Houses built	27
Number of beds	15,000
Can receive daily	3,000
Total cost to settle repatriates' problems, US dollars	1,144 m



Back to the same school, but different classmates



ECONOMY

Agriculture

Agriculture is the mainstay of Afghan peasantry. Notwithstanding the irreparable damage caused by the undeclared war, top priority has been accorded to agriculture by the government to enlist active participation of peasants in increasing their yield and improve the quality of their life.

Under the HS 1367 plan (begun March 20, 1988), 170,000 tons of fertilizer (113,000 tons of urea and 57 tons of phosphate), 16,000 tons of improved wheat seeds, 5,000 tons of cotton seeds, 15 tons of sugar-beet seeds, 1.3 tons of vegetable seeds, animal and plant drugs are to be distributed to peasants at a cost of 150 million Afs. Agro-technical services to effectively raise agricultural production are a part of the annual plan.

A major part of these items has been supplied through Soviet assis-

tance to agricultural sector of Afghanistan.

In view of importance of industrial crops (such as cotton and sugar-beet), 90 per cent of the fertilizers are to be distributed in areas under industrial crops. Also the construction of go-downs and warehouses for fertilizers and seeds will be completed in Nimroz, Farah and Ghazni provinces. With the implementation of these measures, fertilizers would be used in 667,000 hectares (25 per cent of irrigable land) and improved seeds supplied to the peasants to cover 90,000 hectares.

To prevent the spread of diseases and their side-effects, 8.2 thousand tons of different seeds have been treated against diseases as well as preventive measures taken on 33,000 hectares.

In line with the programme for building a centre for combatting the locust menace and construction of same centres which is under way in

Balkh and Kunduz provinces, construction of laboratories for plant protection has been completed in Balkh and Nangarhar provinces.

Publicity activities aimed at dissemination of scientific methods of agriculture are being undertaken this year. Extension units are being re-equipped in some provinces. With the help of these units, 1,358 free demonstration plots for different crops will be established in peasants' lands. In order to propagate improved varieties of vegetables, vegetable farms will be set up on 20 hectares in Bagrami and Badam Bagh areas of Kabul.

Laboratories for quality control of cereals will be set up this year in Baghlan province. Also, units for processing seeds of vegetables and vegetable canning units will be set up in Badam Bagh of Kabul. This measure will further help to increase agricultural production.

Mechanized agricultural stations



Views of peasant cooperative stores



will be provided with more machinery and personnel to expand their area of operation by 122,000 hectares, an increase of 38 per cent over last year. The income accruing from this is expected to be 30 million Afs, which will be a 77 per cent increase over last year. The purchase price of cotton will be doubled, and cotton and sugar-beet growers will get primary goods like sugar, edible oil, soap, oil, etc., at subsidized prices. In addition, the peasants will be given one ton of fertilizer against the delivery of each ton of cotton. This will help increase the cotton harvest from 50,000 (registered last year) to 75,000 tons, and of sugar-beet from 3,000 to 15,000 tons.

Assistance for creating and reviving agricultural cooperatives on the basis of voluntary organization of peasants will continue and material assistance, agro-technical services to cooperative members would be organized. A credit of 105 million Afs will be given to cooperative members this year. Also, it is envisaged that 18,000 tons of surplus production of cooperative members and their 41.5 thousand Karakul pelts will be sold in local and foreign markets.

Regarding the provision of infrastructure facilities for peasants some vanguard cooperatives will be established from the state budget. These establishments will be set up in Farah, Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces.

In the field of livestock breeding, attention would be paid to increasing the number of cattle as well as improvement of their breeds. To his end,

artificial insemination stations of Jauzjan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Kunar, Helmand, Laghman, Ghazni, Samangan, Logar and Wardak provinces have been completed. Adequate medicines and equipment are also given to the various veterinary clinics in the provinces.

In the state sector, around 10,000 hectares of land are under cultivation in state farms from which 5,700 tons of cereals, 518 tons of cotton and 7,600 tons of fruits will be harvested. This shows 55 per cent, 83 per cent and four per cent increase respectively over last year's production.

Work is under way for the Irrigation Complex of Jalalabad and its forms for boosting production. It is expected that over 5,350 hectares will be cultivated under four farms and 1,703 tons of cereals, 4,553 tons of citrus fruits and 2,530 tons of olives will be produced.

During the current year, the total area under cultivation of plants will touch 3.84 million hectares. This would play an important role in augmenting the grains production.

The total production of the current year is anticipated at 4,612,000 tons. The volume of production reached 469,000 tons in last year.

As per the plan, over 2.9 million tons of wheat, 490,000 tons of rice, 335,000 tons of potatoes and 530,000 tons of grapes will be harvested this year.

Farouq





Boeing-727 of
Ariana Afghan
Airlines

Ariana Afghan Airlines

Air transport in Afghanistan, where 70 per cent of the territory is covered by mountains, has played a tremendous role in connecting hundreds of valleys and communities which for centuries had been separated by some of the world's highest mountains.

In 1927, the first flight between Kabul and Tashkent laid the foundation of air service in Afghanistan. In the late 1930's flights from other countries to Afghanistan started. In 1937, an airliner of Lufthansa air company of Germany called *Junker* undertook flights via Herat and Kabul to Tokyo.

After World War II, in 1951 an airliner of Iran joint stock air company started Tehran-Kabul flights via Mashad and Herat. In 1952, an Indian DC-3 airliner of Himalaya Company used to fly from Bombay to Kabul via Karachi, Zahidan and Kandahar. In 1952, 53 and 54, the Transocean, Erjiputi and Andimar airline companies concluded contracts with Afghanistan to transport the Afghan pilgrims to Jeddah. This lasted for three years.

In 1954, a general directorate for civil aviation affiliated to Prime Minister's office was approved to control the airports and maintain regular air transportation in Afghanistan. Since then, the importance and impact of civil aviation has been more tangible in the growth of national economy.

At that time, the national airline of Afghanistan, called *Ariana Afghan Airlines*, was established on the basis of Decree No. 119 dated October 17, 1954 of the Prime Minister's office. The Ariana Afghan Airlines at that time possessed three Douglas DC-3 planes, each carrying 28 passengers. The first Ariana flight inside the country took place in April 1955 to Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. The first flight of the company outside the country was to Bahrain.

As one of the founding members of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and realizing the importance and need of air services at national and international level, in 1947 Afghanistan joined the International Civil Aviation Convention, known as the Chicago Convention. Making use of the assistance of the ICAO, the company focussed its attention on strengthening the national economy through expansion of civil aviation services in the country.

The establishment of Ariana Afghan Airlines and expansion of its services resulted in the need for training qualified technical personnel, construction of airports, installation of communication and hydrometeorological units.

With an aim to manage and develop this branch of state services, the General Directorate for Civil Aviation was promoted in 1956 to a department

functioning under the Prime Minister's office. The directorates of meteorology and communications came under this department to carry out coordinated activities in their respective fields.

After Kabul International Airport, airports were established in Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Jalalabad, and Maimana. These airports were equipped with communication and plane-guiding units; meteorological stations were also established in different parts of the country.

Agreements were signed on air transport between the governments of Afghanistan and Iran, India, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Northern Korea, the GDR, Vietnam, China and Bangladesh for expansion of international air services.

Regretfully, after the April Revolution, the FRG, the UK and France unilaterally annulled the air agreements with Afghanistan on December 1, 1982. The international flights of Ariana planes have since then been confined only to Tashkent, Moscow, Prague, Delhi, Amritsar and Dubai. Of the foreign companies, today only Aeroflot of the Soviet Union and Indian Airlines have regular flights to Kabul.

Domestic Flights

Parallel with the expansion of international flights by Ariana Afghan Airlines, the need for expansion of domestic air services was also felt.

To meet this need, *Bakhtar Afghan Airlines* was established in 1968 by the then government. It started functioning with *Twin Atrac* Canadian-made planes.

Local airports were also built for domestic flights in Bamyan, Cheghcheran, Qalai-Naw, Terinkot, Zaranj, Khost, Gardez, Taluqan, Farah, Lashkargah, Faizabad, Khuahan, Sheghnan and Darwaz.

After the April Revolution of 1978, land transport also gained importance and thus the Ministry of Transport was formed in 1979. The Civil Aviation Department was brought under this ministry.

The Civil Aviation Department was separated at the end of 1983 from the Transport Ministry and, in March 1986, was promoted to the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Positive steps were taken by the Ministry for the development of civil aviation. The extension and reconstruction of Kabul International Airport, repairs and rehabilitation of Kandahar and Herat airports, extension of their runways and construction of Mazar-i-Sharif airport and some new local airports were undertaken.

In 1985, the government of Afghanistan decided that Ariana Afghan Airlines company be dissolved and the crew, equipment and planes be merged into Bakhtar Afghan Airlines. It was done with a view to further expand air transport and set up a unified national company which would carry out both domestic and international services. It was done, and Bakhtar Afghan Airlines, as a unified powerful State institution, started making domestic and international flights on January 1, 1986.

Ariana Afghan Airlines which had got membership of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and had been known as a long standing and credible company in the world, was again revived on the proposal of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Resolution No. 289 dated Jan. 16, 1987 of the Council of Ministers by changing the name of Bakhtar Afghan Airlines into Ariana Afghan Airlines.

Now, Ariana Afghan Airlines possesses 12 planes: two US-made Boeing-727, each with a capacity of 125 passengers; two TU-154 Soviet-made planes, each with a capacity of 162 passengers; four Soviet-made AN-26 planes, each with a capacity of 40



Assia,
hostess of
A. A. A.

passengers; two Soviet-made AN-24 planes, each with a capacity of 52 passengers, and two Soviet-made YAK-40 planes, each with a capacity of 26 passengers. Of these 12 planes, four are Boeing-727 and TU-154, which serve long-distance flights, that is, from Kabul to Moscow, Prague, Dubai, Frankfurt, Delhi and Amritsar. The other eight planes, which can serve medium flights, function inside the country. However, now the Boeing and TU-154 planes, in addition to making international flights, also serve domestic flights between Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif.

After being renamed, Ariana Afghan Airlines has carried out the following services during the last two years:

— In 1986, it has transported 197,318 passengers. The turnover of the transport of passengers had been

169,365,400 passenger/km. Also 5,671 tons of consignment with a total cycle of 8,092,000 km/ton have been transported during the period.

— In 1987, 239,186 passengers with a turnover of 2,158,983 passenger/km and 76,401 tons of consignment with a turnover of 100,187 tons/km have been transported by Ariana planes.

Positive changes have appeared in better organizing the booking and selling of tickets, which include job division, creation of domestic and international sectors, as well as maintenance of planes. The capability of the crew and equipment of Ariana have been increased which holds out bright prospects for further air services by this Afghan national air company at national and international levels.

Lailuma Wata



Passengers
boarding a
Bakhtar
airliner for a
domestic
flight



CREPCA Carpets



CREPCA supplies variety of carpets and rugs at home and abroad

CREPCA Company is one of the many State-run carpet enterprises established in Kabul during recent years in a bid to streamline the Afghan carpet industry. Established in 1983, CREPCA functions not only as a sales outlet for a variety of traditional Afghan carpets, *gilims* (rugs made of wool and cotton) and *shatranjis* (cotton rugs) procured directly from villages throughout the country, but also as a modern workshop where carpet knotting is undertaken under the supervision of master craftsmen using first quality raw material and techniques. The aim, explains an official of the company, is to combine the best of traditional carpets with modern techniques. The result is at once indigenous, yet sophisticated.

Carpet weaving in Afghanistan is rooted in the past, part of a hereditary tradition that has been handed down from family to family in certain tribes. The art was originally practiced on the both sides of the Amu River by Turkoman tribes and their sub-clans like Ersari, Tekke, Sarukh and Beshiri. In the western areas of the country, carpet weaving is dominated by the Baluches, who have had links with weavers in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. But over the years, Afghan carpet weavers in both north and west (the two main carpet producing zones) have evolved their own designs and methods so that their products are distinct from those of their neighbours. Their intrinsic beauty and durability have over the years earned for Afghan carpets a reputation in world markets. Production and marketing came to be organized in cooperation with traders in West Europe and the USA and today some 90 per cent of the carpets produced are exported, thus netting valuable foreign exchange. In this process, the industry has had to adapt to changing times.

This is where companies like CREPCA today serve a dual purpose. First, they have a regular staff whose job is to periodically tour the villages, contact carpet making families and buy their produce at a price fair to the weaver. This ensures a reasonable wage to the weaver and prevents exploitation. The carpets bought are then transported to the CREPCA showroom in Kabul, where they are available both for local sale or for export. It is the latter however that comprises the main source of revenue for the company, which exports an average of 6,000 sq. m of carpets, 2,500 sq. m of *gilims* and 500 sq. m of *shatranjis*. These include all the traditional colours and designs like *Pai-i-fil* (elephant's foot — still the most traditional that is to be found in every Afghan home), Saroukh, Mauri, Beshiri and Zahir Shahi designs. Most traditional Afghan carpets have a red or brown central field decorated with octagonal or hexagonal *gul* (flower)

motifs in different sizes. These are outlined in contrasting shades. All traditional carpets also have several borders woven in intricate designs. In these traditional carpets only domestic wool is used, the best coming from the Karakul and Kandahari sheep. The dyes used are entirely natural, blended from herbs and vegetables that have been in use for centuries. Traditionally they are woven on horizontal looms, mostly with double yarn.

The second function of CREPCA and other such companies is to adapt traditional designs to modern techniques. The Kabul workshop employs 50 girls, hailing those from carpet weaving families, who have brought their traditional skills to vertical metal looms. This is an innovation that ensures speed and better turn out. The raw material is both indigenous wool and imported yarn, Belgium being the main supplier. Dyes used here are both natural and synthetic. The latter are brighter, but both are equally permanent.

In conjunction with this bid at modernization through organized workshops, the company is also trying to

introduce new designs known as *Mo Assasati* and *Kaushan*. These are blends of the best of tradition and modernity, a unique mix of traditional designs with modern dyes and looms. Such carpets woven in these specialized workshops are among the finest produced. Another diversification introduced by CREPCA is the use of pure silk yarn in carpet weaving. Carpets are either exclusively of silk or a mixture of silk and wool (*abresham-pasham*), and are very fine and light in texture. Both these varieties are however more expensive than woollen carpets because silk is imported. Both chemical and natural dyes are used.

CREPCA now plans a new scheme under which its carpet weavers will go to Iran and Turkey for further training in weaving techniques. This would help diversification further. However, officials are quick to emphasize that the essential qualities of traditional Afghan carpet weaving will not be forgotten in the process. The carpet industry will always have at its centre the craftsman, and hence will always remain individualized.

R. R.



CREPCA Co. LTD., an Afghan firm producing and exporting hand-woven short and long-napped carpets and rugs, offers its production to the world markets at reasonable prices.

The company constantly tries to improve the quality of its production and modify traditional designs of Afghan carpets according to the customers' demand, at the same time preserving their originality and particular beauty, which have gained them a world-wide fame.

CREPCA's Afghan hand-woven carpets would look rich and pleasing in every home.

For further information refer to CREPCA's main office in Haji Yaqoub cross-road, Shahr-i-Naw, Kabul City; Tel: 30351, P.O.Box: 3216, Telex: 234.



At a CREPCA store in Kabul

They are worth bargaining

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to the Editor



Editor-in-Chief
AFGHANISTAN TODAY
Post Office Box 1013
Kabul
The Republic of Afghanistan.

Dear Sir,

I am The Founding Director of The Central Utah Arts Festival, in Salina, Utah, which is located in the Western United States, and I have chosen Salina, as a focal point, to use culture as a means of expression.

We just gained a large box of beautiful brochures, and many of your publications, from the Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan, in Washington, D.C., and I am indeed honored, and grateful, for their support.

... As I write to you, I reflect on the publication of Afghanistan, and see what beautiful people you have in your country. I sense a portion of patriotism, and pride, with what I can intuitively detect, in reading, and seeing the photographs in Afghanistan Today.

... We are specifically looking for large postcard collections, and an ample supply of black and white photographs, and colored photographs.

Until I hear from you, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

DEAN CHRISTENSEN
Founding Director
The Central Utah Arts Festival
Salina, Utah 84654

Dear Mr CRISTENSEN,

Thanks for your kind letter. We wish you success in your festival. We will be happy to contribute to this cultural festival of Salina. We shall appreciate if you indentify the photographs in our magazine so that we would be able to send you the originals. Please include the cost of postage in case you wish to have some of these photographs.

Sincerely yours,
Editorial Office

Kharkov Regional Voluntary Sports Society
"Trudovyye Reservy", Physical Culture Collective of
Vocational School No. 36, Lozovaya town

REGIONAL CLUB OF BICYCLE TOURISTS
named after G. TRAVIN

10.11.1987

Editor-in-Chief of
AFGHANISTAN TODAY Magazine
Kabul

Dear Comrade Editor-in-Chief,

Members of the Club of Bicycle Tourists from the USSR send their sincere greetings to you and all members of the staff of the magazine.

All members of our club, representing mainly student youth, express our solidarity with the struggle of the Afghan people against the undeclared war unleashed by imperialism and support the national reconciliation policy of the PDPA. We believe that soon peace will come to your long-suffering land and finally your people would be able to rest in tranquillity and probably they would set their own clubs of bicycle tourists. It will be then that we would ask you to dig our letter from the depths of your editorial desk and help in establishing links of common human friendship between our clubs.

On behalf of the Club,
Sincerely yours,
Alexei Potupin,
Chairman of the Club

Kharkov Sports Society

Dear Chairman,

We are grateful for your kind letter expressing solidarity with the Afghan cause i.e., restoration of peace in the country. You may establish links with our bicycle racing clubs through Afghan Olympic Centre, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Regards,
Editorial Office

Royal Road
Boulet Rouge
Central Flacq
Indian Ocean
Mauritius

16th January, 1988.

Dear Sir,

With reference made on 15th January, 1988 on "Mauritius Times Magazines". It would be very nice to receive first-hand information on events in Afghanistan. And in this way I can improve my English. So I ask for further information regarding the amount to be paid annually in terms of Rupees. Frankly speaking, I can afford the payment each month and not all the money at a time — simply because I am still a student.

Yours faithfully,
Nessen Permal

Dear Nessen Permal,

Annual subscription for AFGHANISTAN TODAY is 10 US dollars. You can convert your national currency to US dollars and send the cheque to the following address.

Account No 5381/9
Da Afghanistan Bank
Kabul Afghanistan

Sincerely yours,
Editorial Office

Messrs,

Mr. B.K. Baluch, student in Greece, Mr. L.F. Ordenez from Spain, Miss T. Auleear from Mauritius, Mr. M. Thaylan Mr. S. A. Singh from India and Syed Ibrahim from Pakistan.

We have received your inquiries for subscription to Afghanistan Today magazine. Please send 10 US dollars fee to the following address:

Account No 5831/9
Da Afghanistan Bank
Kabul Afghanistan

You will receive our magazine regularly in 1989.

Sincerely Yours
Editorial Office



Baricot, Kabul

Afghan Stamps

When one thinks about stamps, one would definitely recall postal services. But these two, especially the former, are comparatively new phenomena, while different kinds of communication have existed since the times immemorial.

We have many legends and fables of pigeons that carried love letters, governmental commands and royal decrees, from place to place. The story of Solomon and his errand bird hoopoe is very popular among our people. Hafiz wrote many ghazals on this story of how King Solomon used to send his hoopoe to Saba, the residence of his beloved Bilqis, with messages of love.

Tarikh-i-Baihaqi, *Qabus Nama* and many other historical works testify to the fact that for many centuries the courier system was an indispensable part of the royal court, in the manner that the administration and army were. For communications are always the life-line of any system.

In Afghanistan the use of stamps and the first formal postal service were introduced in the reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan. The first Afghan stamp was issued in May, 1871, some decades after it had originated in England. Historically, the stamps of Afghanistan were inspired by the British, who ruled indirectly almost all kings of the 19th century.

Amir Sher Ali Khan was famous for his wide-ranging socio-economic reforms. Despite a decade of strife and battles with his sons and brothers, who were his severe rivals, Amir Sher Ali Khan tried his best to consolidate central power and rapidly modernize the country. Mohammad Ghubar writes in his book "Afghanistan in the Course of History" that among the institutions established by Amir Sher Ali Khan's government, was that of post offices in both the capital and some major provinces, including Peshawar. He set up a lithographic printing house in 1875 in Kabul where stamps and *Shams-ul-Nahar* (the first fortnightly periodical of Afghanistan) were printed.

The stamps of Amir Sher Ali Khan

were circular in shape. A lion's head was a popular motif in the stamps of that time, used as a symbol of the King's name (*Sher* means "lion"). The emblem of the *Shams-ul-Nahar* consisted of two standing lions holding swords. The first stamps were also imperforated and ungummed, having marginal decorations. They were valued according to the common currency of the time (1 Rupia Kabuli - 2 Qiran - 3 Abasi - 6 Saner - 12 Shahi).

When stamps were used, they were cut or torn out, but sometimes the stamps were also crossed out. Philatelists do not consider such stamps as damaged or useless, because they reflect postal history. Afghan stamps continued to be ungummed until 1907.

During the reign of Amir Abdurrahman Khan (1880-1901), the circular shape of Afghan stamps gave way to rectangular and square. A mosque entrance, pulpit and adytum with national flags were main subjects of the stamp design as well as the handwritten sentence "The God-given Government of Afghanistan".

During the reign of Amir Abdurrahman Khan the process of conciliation remained as before. The government seals did not consist of any postal dues, and all stamps were valued at *Abasi*. Stamps for registered and ordinary mail were different.

In the reign of Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), special stamps for government letters were issued. Stamps were conciliated by seals, and perforated stamps made their first appearance. These were valued at *Paisa* (60 paisas - 1 Rupia).

During the reign of Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), Afghan philately developed, both as regards publication and designs. The European year had been printed in both sides of stamps and the line "The High Government of Afghanistan". Beautiful thematic stamps were published. Special stamps commemorated the annual independence jubilees.

During the nine-month rule of Amir Habibullah, popularly known as *Bacha-e-Saqau* (Watercarrier's Son)

(1929), handstamped seals appeared. They were circular in shape and the sentence "Amir Habibullah, the Servant of the Faith of Mohammad, the Prophet of Allah", was printed between two ears of wheat, while on the top of it was a five-point star.

With subsequent development in the country, postal services and philatelic activities intensified. Stamp collecting came to be considered an intellectual hobby. Stamp acquired broader themes. Historical monuments, archaeological relics and ruins were commonly displayed on stamps. Later, stamps turned into a symbolic panorama of the Afghan life, depicting national sports, eminent social and political figures, agricultural products, birds, flora and fauna as well as folk arts.

Afghanistan started bringing out stamps on international occasions in 1951, when a special stamp was issued to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the formation of the United Nations. It was followed by a stamp to commemorate the seventy-sixth anniversary of the formation of the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

In 1970, a special stamp was issued to commemorate the centenary of the first Afghan postage stamps. Circulation of this single stamp ran into thousands.

In 1974, the first Stamp Museum of Afghanistan was established under the Communication Ministry. The Ministry also published "Bird", a bi-monthly journal, for many years. The journal published articles and features on philatelic, national and international issues as well as reports on philatelic activities abroad. It also published translations from international philatelic sources.

Kabul has been the venue of many stamp exhibitions from different countries. Afghan stamps are displayed frequently at international exhibitions.

The world catalogue of stamps indicates the high position of Afghan stamps, which enjoy great philatelic demand the world over.

Ehsan Azari



1989



JANUARY

MON		2	9	16	23	30
TUE		3	10	17	24	31
WED		4	11	18	25	
THU		5	12	19	26	
FRI		6	13	20	27	
SAT		7	14	21	28	
SUN	1	8	15	22	29	

FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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JUNE

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4	11	18	25	

Calandar

FRATERNAL NATIONALITIES

Uzbeks

An Uzbek
girl



Uzbeks and other Turkic-speaking nationalities have inhabited the northern and north-western parts of Afghanistan for as long as one can remember. They have settled down in Badakhshan, Badghis and Herat as well as Ghazni and Kabul. According to Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghubar ("Afghanistan in the Course of History"), the first Turkic tribes arrived in Afghanistan way back in the 6th century A.D. The first Turkic government, called the Tageen Kingdom, was established in the north of Aryana (as Afghanistan was then called). The kingdom defended the independence and territorial integrity of our country, first against the invasion of Sasanids, and then against the Arabs.

Most historical works, particularly those of the Arabs, refer to Hephthalities (425—556 A.D.) as descendants of Arabs. It can thus be safely assumed that the Turkic-speaking people (including Uzbeks) had settled down in Afghanistan 1,500 years ago. The influx of different Turkic tribes continued down the years. They also spread to the southern parts of the country toward the north of the Hindukush range.

Over the years, they intermixed with other tribes living in the regions, as a result of which their basic character traits, complexion, language and appearance underwent a thorough metamorphosis. They thus joined the mainstream of Afghan nationalities.

Many Turkic kings, big and small, ruled over parts or the whole of Afghanistan, at different times. Among them were the Ghaznavids (962—1148 A.D.), the Saljuqs (1039—1153 A.D.), the Herat Timurids, the Indian Gorganids (Baburis) and the Sheybanees.

The word "Uzbek" came to denote these Turkic-speaking people much later. In the 12th and 13th centuries the word referred to an individual, not a group or a people. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Turkic and Mongol tribes leading a nomadic life in eastern Qapchaq came to be known as Uzbeks. Mongol chieftains like Uzbek Khan (1312—1314), Tokhta Mesh (1376—1358) and armies of some other "Khans" like *Alteen Urdeh* (Golden Horde) were all called Uzbeks, and mostly lived in the eastern parts of the country.

Sheibanee Khan and his tribe were referred to as Uzbeks in some works of history. In his famous *Baburnamah*, Zaeheeruddin Mohammad Babur repeatedly calls

Sheibanee Khan and his army as Uzbeks. According to available records, Sheibanee Khan's coming to Afghanistan enriched the Uzbek ethnic composition. The Hyrmit Uzbeks, who had moved in the early 16th century with Sheibanee Khan into Transoxania should not, therefore, be considered as the precursors of Uzbek influence in Central Asia. Long before their advent, the Uzbeks had settled down in Afghanistan with a distinct culture and civilization of their own going as far back as 10th and 11th centuries A. D.

At present, Uzbeks form a sizeable chunk of Afghan population and are settled in Kunduz, Baghlan, Samangan, Balkh, Fariab, Badghis, Herat and parts of Kabul. No precise figures are, however, available regarding their number. They occupy a significant place among Afghan nationalities today.

In the first half of the 19th century most of the 97 Uzbek tribes lived in Bukhara and outlying areas. Some 28 tribes or so inhabited the northern parts of Afghanistan. By the end of the 19th century, they were divided into such tribes as Neeman, Qataghan, Qushchi, Qorama, Meeng, Sari, Barlas, Qurloq, Qoltorat, Manqheyat, Qeyat, Timor, Beraka, Tobani, Qapchaq, Arghoon, Qater, Togol, Yoz, Jalayer, Oterchi, Moghul, Toghal, Sarabash, etc.

Some Uzbeks living on the northern banks of the Amu River migrated to Afghanistan after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia (1917). They settled down in the vicinities of Kabul and Lashkargah, centre of Helmand province. Tajiks, Turkmen, Pashtuns, Hazaras and Arabs also live in these areas.

Struggle Against Colonialism

The Uzbeks of Afghanistan, along with other nationalities, played a significant role in the liberation movement against British colonialism. *Saraj-ul-Tawarikh*, *Afghanistan in the Course of History* and other history books testify to the bravery and valour of thousands of Uzbek militants who were in the forefront for driving the British out of Afghan territory. According to Ghubar,



An Uzbek family at tea



Performing
an Uzbek
dance

Imam Wirdi Uzbek was among the leaders in the vanguard of struggle against the British. Prof. Ghulam Mohammad Maimanagi and Mohammad Karim Nazihi (Jelwa) were among prominent constitutionalists. Ghulam Mohammad Maimanagi was among those who brought the draft of constitutional changes to Amir Habibullah Khan in Jalalabad. He was, however, arrested and imprisoned.

Agriculturists and Cattle-Breeders

Uzbeks are mostly engaged in agriculture, particularly cattle-breeding. Rearing of Karakul sheep is their speciality. The Uzbeks of Balkh, Jauzjan and Fariab are engaged in raising Karakul sheep. Varieties such as Teqer, Kaboodcha and Soor have been internationally recognized and appreciated.

Other Uzbek occupations in the country are carpet and longpile carpet weaving, handlooms, coppersmithy, blacksmithy, goldsmithy, pottery and engraving.



At work

Language and Literature

The evolution of Turkic language began in the 1st century A. D. However, authentic records about the development of the language are not available till the sixth century A. D. when the Tokyo government was established on the banks of the Orkhon and Yenisey Rivers. On the orders of the Tokyo Koltakin ruler, Turkic inscriptions were engraved on the tomb of his brother Belka Qaan. By doing so, he wished to emphasize the role played by him and his brother in bringing together the various Turkic-speaking tribes to form a powerful Turkic government. These inscriptions, excavated in the late 19th century, present a record of 1,400 years; they are a valuable legacy of all Turkic-speaking peoples, including Uzbeks.

The history of Uzbek language can be divided into three periods:

(i) **Ancient Turkic Language:** This appeared in the 10th and 11th centuries A. D., and was first explored by A. N. Samoylovich. Famous works like *Qotad Ghobelik*, *Atobat-ul-Haqayeq* and "*Divan Loghat-ul-Turk* (a dictionary), are among the findings of the ancient Turkic period. This language was not only the languages of the Uzbek people but also of all the peoples of Turkic origin in Central Asia.

(ii) **Ancient Uzbek Language:** This language came into being in the 13th—15th centuries A. D., and was used till the October Revolution (1917). Mir Ali Sher Nawaie played a prominent role in the growth and development of this language.

(iii) **Modern Uzbek Language:** The flowering of modern Uzbek came in the wake of the October Revolution. It is spoken in its different dialects in Soviet Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The USSR has paid keen attention to the development of this language in Uzbekistan while in our country enough attention has not been paid to it yet. This has been on account of the past regimes and the general backwardness of society. After the April Revolution in Afghanistan efforts are being made to develop and enrich this language.

Uzbek literature, like all literatures in the world, had an oral tradition long before it came to have a written one. Written Uzbek literature can be traced to the 11th and 12th centuries A. D. (corresponding to the 3rd and 4th centuries HS). This was a significant period in the literature of Uzbeks. Ancient Uzbek and Aighori were used by writers at this time. Later, Chaghtaie (literary vehicle for expression in ancient Uzbek came to be employed in a philosophical treatise such as *Qutad Gho Belaik* by Yosuf Khas Hajeb Bala Saghoni). It was in the 11th century that Mahmoud-bin-ul-Hussein Al Kashghari compiled *Divan Loghat-ul-Turk* in Arabic and presented it to the Abassid Caliph. In this valuable dictionary, he defined thousands of Turkic words, illustrated proverbs and collected the folklore of Turkic-speaking peoples in Central Asia. Ahmad Yognagi's *Atobat-ul-Haqayeq* also belongs to this period.

In the 15th and 16th centuries A. D. (7th and 8th centuries HS) Turkic language grew in popularity. Impressed by the performance of Dari literatures, such, works in Turkic (then known as ancient Uzbek) *Mohabbat Namah* by Khwarazmi, *Letafat Namah* by Khu Jandi, *Qessa* by Yosuf Ali, *Qesas-ul-Anbia* by Rabghozi and *Khesraw Wa Shireen* by Qutb came to be composed. From the ninth century HS (17th century A. D.), Herat, Samarqand and Sheraz emerged to be the three centres for the growth and development of Uzbek language and literature with such famous literary figures as Lutfi Herawi, Sakaki Samarqandi, Ataie Balkhi, and Haide, Khwarazmi.

Nawaie and Babur

In the second half of the 15th century A.D., thanks to the keen interest taken by Sultan Hussein Baiqera and far-reaching measures adopted by Amir Ali Sher Nawaie, a strong impetus was given to the language of literature of Uzbeks. Nawaie, the poet-politician of the times, is considered Father of Modern Uzbek Literature. With his over 30 scientific and literary creations in prose and poetry, Nawaie played a significant role in the blossoming of Uzbek language and literature. His prominent works include four divans of Turkic poetry, five Mathnawis and stories, entitled *Huira-ul-Abrar*, *Farhad wa Shireen*, *Laili wa Majnoon*, *Sebai Seyar*, *Sade Sikandari*, *Majalis-ul-Nafayes*, *Nasayem-ul-Muhba*, *Mahboob-ul-Qolub*, *Lesan-ul-Tair*, etc.

In the 16th century A.D., Zaheeruddin Mohammad Babur came on the scene as a versatile political, cultural and literary figure. He is an author of several works of history in Uzbek, of which *Baburnamah* is the most prominent.

In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries A.D. centres for Uzbek language and literature flourished in Khoqand, Khewa and Bukhara. Prominent literary figures of the era were Nadera Begum, Makhmoor, Amiri, Agahi, Monnes, Mushreb and Oisee.

As mentioned earlier, great strides have been made in the development of Uzbek language and literature in the Soviet Union after the Great October Socialist Revolution on account of the keen attention paid by the government there. Scores of gifted writers, poets and scientists have enriched the Uzbek language and literature there. And in Afghanistan, attention is being paid to the language and literature of one of our prominent nationalities after the victory of April Revolution.

Constitutional Guarantees

"Citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan, both men and women, have equal rights and duties in the eyes of the law, irrespective of their national, racial, linguistic, tribal, educational and social status, religion, creed, political conviction, occupation, kinship, wealth and residence," states Article Thirty-eight of the Constitution of the Republic of Afghanistan approved by the Loya Jirgah of the people of Afghanistan held in November, 1987.

Following the victory of April Revolution, the Uzbek nationality has notched up significant achievements in the cultural sphere. For instance, Uzbek children were



Street sale

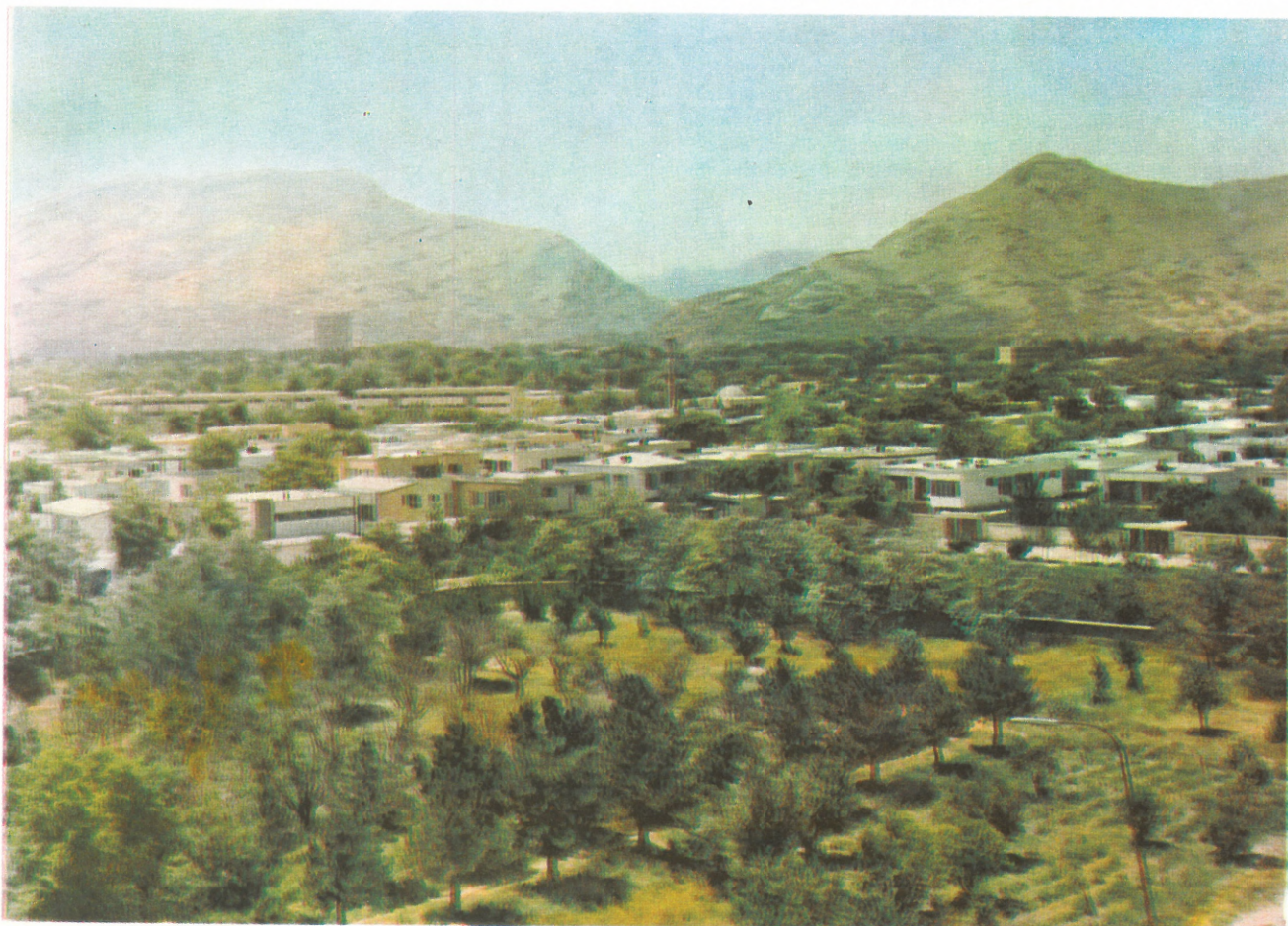
provided opportunity, where it was possible, to receive education in their mother tongue. Thousands of textbooks were compiled in Uzbek for the first to seventh grade students. *Yuldoz*, a periodical, came out in Uzbek; Radio Afghanistan began broadcasting a one-hour programme in Uzbek; a special department was set up within the framework of the Ministry of Education for compiling text-books in Uzbek; Department of Fraternal Nationalities came into being under the Institute of Languages and Literature of the RA Academy of Sciences for conducting research on Uzbek language and literature; Uzbek department was opened in the Faculty of Languages and Literature, Kabul University. Following books were published in the language: *Divan* by Zaheeruddin Mohammad Babur, *Khalq Tafakori*, *Khalq Bardana Leri*, *Mahboob-Quloob Baburga Armaghan*, *Makaram-ul-Akhlaq*, *Yangi Zaman Tarana Leri* and *Olkam Bahari* (collections of poems by Abdul Salam Azem, Mateen Andkhoie, Ashraf Azim Andkhoie, Tashqeen Bahaie and others).

The successes scored in ensuring democratic rights for all nationalities, tribes and ethnic groups of the country are significant in the growth of their languages, literature and culture. But in view of their needs and grave deprivations, they do not amount to much. The present conditions require that, for ensuring genuine social justice, their participation in the defence of the homeland, their legal and material rights should be guaranteed and implemented according to the provisions enshrined in the Constitution.

Halim Yarqeen



Uzbek women are good carpet weavers. Posing for our photographer



A view of a modern section of Kabul city

SOCIAL WELFARE

Low-cost, High-rise

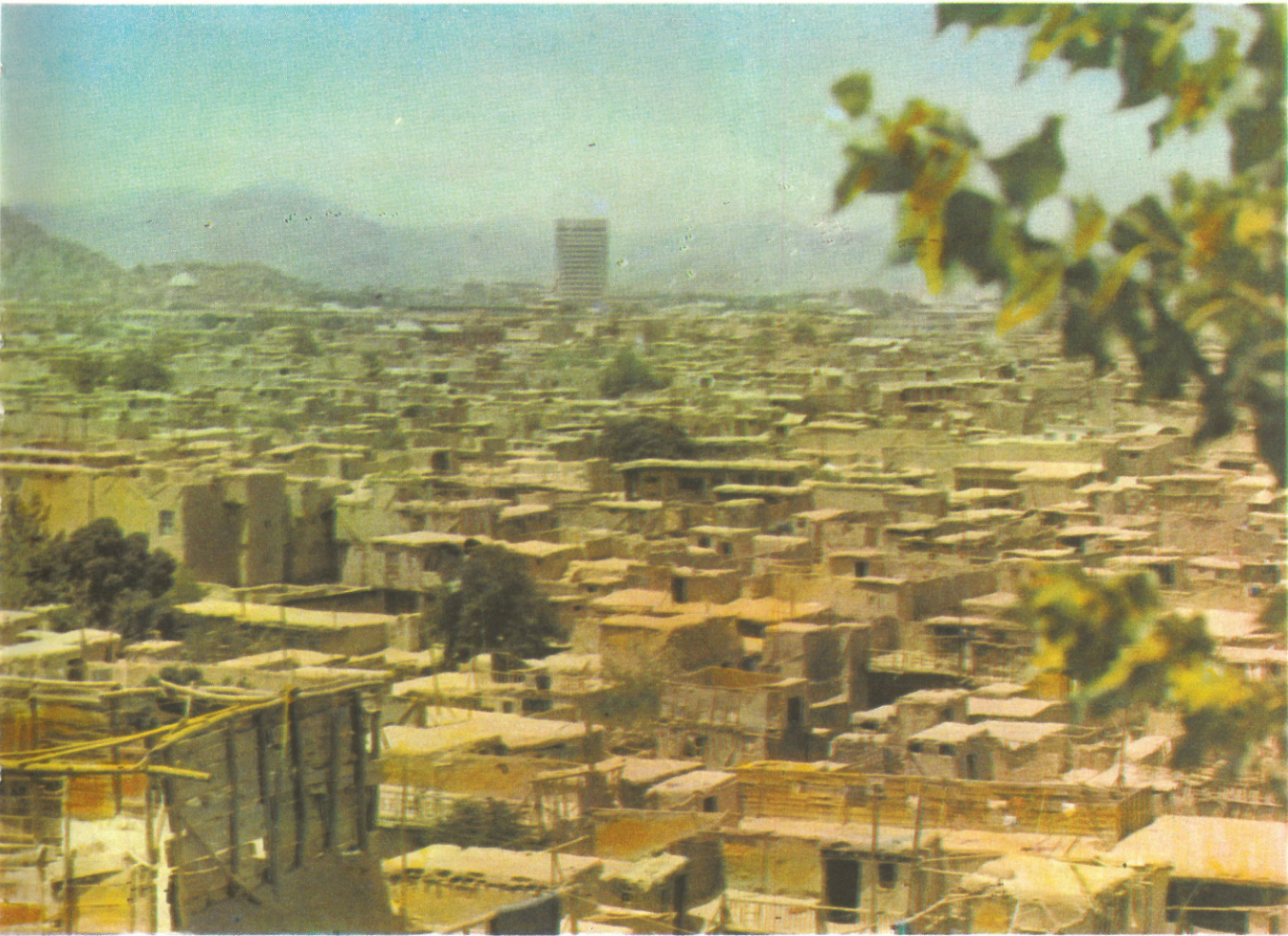
A private house



The micro-district housing scheme is an entirely new concept in low-cost group housing in Afghanistan. Started first in 1961 as an experiment in modern living, the project has grown from modest 280 flats to 8,504 apartments at present. The construction of another four residential projects — micro-districts 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D — is under way and is scheduled to be completed by 1999.

There are two unique aspects of the micro-district scheme. First, all the houses are built from prefabricated construction material, and second the concept of high-rise group apartments is new to Afghanistan, a land where houses were traditionally built of mud, with one or two storeys and surrounded by large compounds and high walls.

The use of prefabricated material is ideally suited to this kind of con-



An old section
of Kabul



An old private
house

Living

struction. Walls and ceilings, for instance, are constructed at the prefabricated factory in bulk, then transported to the site to be assembled. It is certainly a much faster way of delivering the goods, and in view of the housing situation in Kabul, the most effective. On the debit side is the fact that such large-scale production leads to loss of individuality — a drawback which many residents complain of. Municipal officials, however, are quick to point out that it is a question of priority — one good thing being sacrificed in the interest of the larger good.

The prefabricated factory was expanded for the first time in 1978 and its production capacity raised from 31,000 cubic metres of reinforced concrete to 37,000. Due to the rising demand of Kabul residents for residential blocks, the factory was again expanded in 1984 and its production

went up to 100,000 square metres of residential areas per annum.

The first apartments came up in 1964 in the area that today is called "Old micro-district". The complex was built with an initial outlay of 262 million Afghanis with 26,000 cubic metres of prefabricated material. "Old micro-district" covered 35,000 square metres of land and had a total of 280 apartments built over 40 blocks. The aim at that time was to modernize living amenities in Kabul. The idea was entirely new, recalls one of the first residents. He admits, that it took him and his family some time to adjust to the idea of living in apartment — smaller spaces, multi-storey building and the heat in summer. But there were also advantages such as regular supply of potable water, hot water on fixed days of the week, central heating in winter, round-the-clock electricity, and security.

Need was felt for more building activity in 1978 when the prefabricated factory was rebuilt to cater to increased production. It was then decided to extend the project to the "New micro-district" area.

There is a marked difference in apartment designs in "Old" and "New" residential blocks. For one thing, apartments in the new area are larger, some having as many as three bedrooms and two or even three bathrooms — a convenience rare even in large bungalows. Municipal officials say that each year a different plan for



housing is drafted. This mitigates, to some extent, the complaint that the houses are monotonous in design and lack individuality. It is planned to build 1,136 new apartments by March, 1989 and also to extend the present residential complex to cover both sides of the road to the airport and the area around Bibi Mehroo Hill by 1993.

For the sake of municipal planning, a residential block is divided into various complexes. There are two sub-districts within the old micro-district and recently a fourth one has been started in the new one. Each

complex has its complement of parks, play-grounds, shopping centres, kindergartens and schools. There are already two mosques in the area and a third congregational one is under construction in block 3A. According to the principles of scientific planning, there is a distance of 14 metres between each block to ensure proper circulation of air and light.

Not that people living here do not have their problems. Each apartment block is six or even seven storeys high. In the absence of elevators, this is trying for harassed housewives who have to carry their shopping all the



A new block of apartment houses in Kabul (first micro-district)



Third
micro-district
of Kabul

way up. Municipal officials admit, this is an inconvenience, but it would be rectified over the next few years when apartments with eight or nine storeys will be provided with elevators. Residents also point out the infiltration of dust, which was kept out in the older mud houses with their high surrounding walls. Visitors unfamiliar with the colony, complain that there are no sign posts or road maps inside the colony to give directions or apartment numbers. Some resourceful residents have, however, risen to the occasion by providing their own guide charts outside their

blocks. It is hoped the municipality would soon do something about this.

But it is good value for money, each resident having to pay only 600 Afghanis per room as monthly rent. The State on its part is paying an annual subsidy of 75 million Afghanis to meet the shortfall.

The government has recently restarted the ownership scheme for apartments in such residential blocks. People desirous of purchasing an apartment can do so by paying an initial instalment of 10 per cent of the cost of the house, the rest phased out over 40 years. But it is to one's advan-

tage to pay up at the earliest because the owner can then rent it out or even sell it, to added advantage. The cost of a three-room suite is 600,000. The response to the scheme has been very good so far as people are keen to acquire their own houses.

Construction has been undertaken in accordance with the master plan of Kabul that was formulated in 1978, and buildings are quake-proof up to eight and even nine bars. The entire complex is funded by gratis aid from the USSR.

R. Rastogi

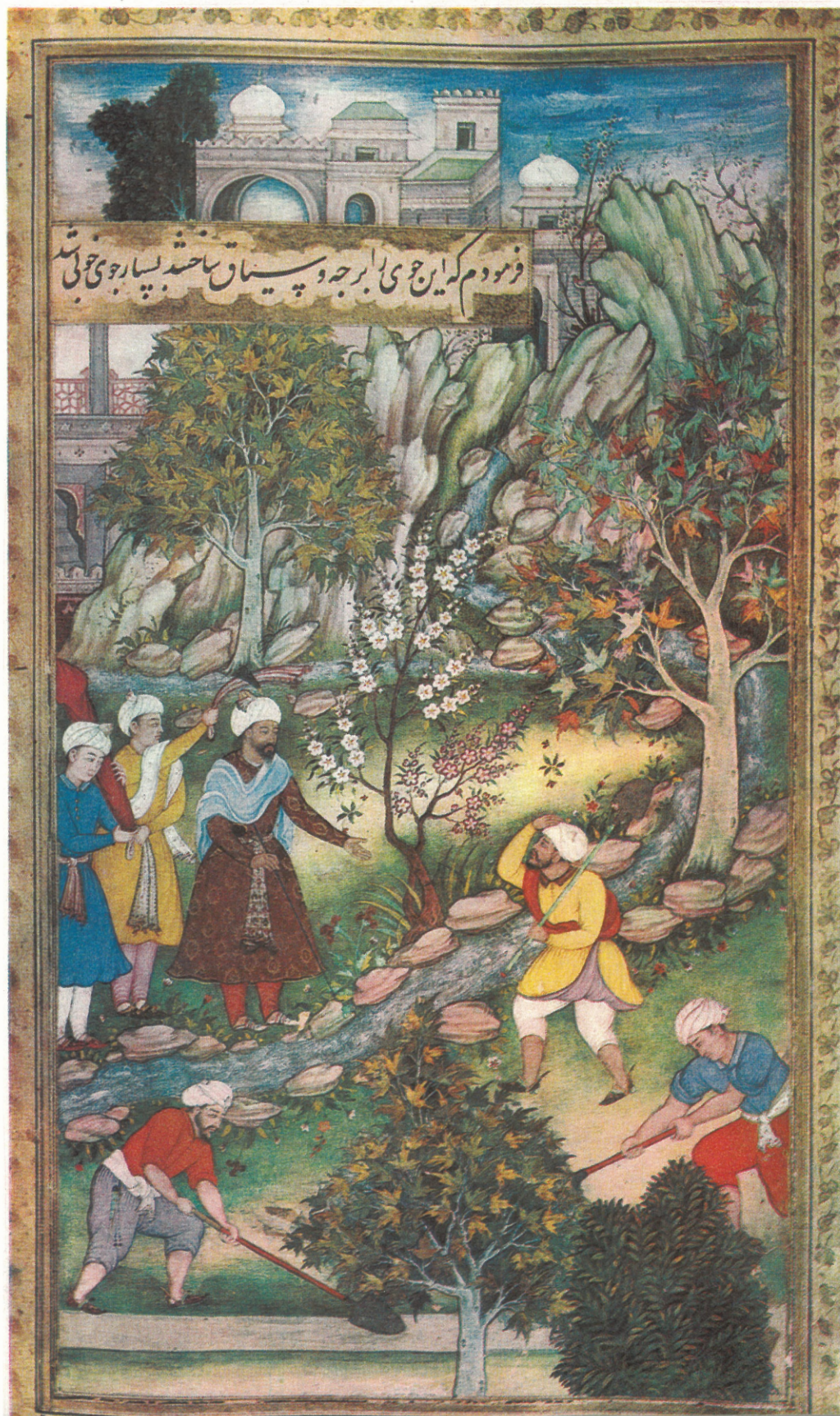


Second
micro-district

PLACE TO VISIT

A miniature depicting Babur while planning the Garden

Babur's Garden



The reign of Moghul emperors of India in contrast with other dynasties in Asia is characterized by the flourishing of Islamic architecture, painting as well as other cultural and scientific artifacts in India and Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan there are still quite a few gardens laid during the Moghul period in Kabul, Jalalabad, Parwan and Kandahar. These gardens are the most fascinating public parks and are visited by thousands of picnickers in various seasons.

Bagh-i-Babur (Babur's Garden) is one of the most beautiful examples of Moghul gardens in Afghanistan where the beauties of nature, the plants and the aesthetic potentials of man are skilfully linked together, creating an immortal masterpiece of art and architecture.

Apparently, one may get the impression that Bagh-i-Babur is an ordinary garden just like hundreds of others, because the tradition of laying gardens in Afghanistan goes back to as long as 2,500 years.

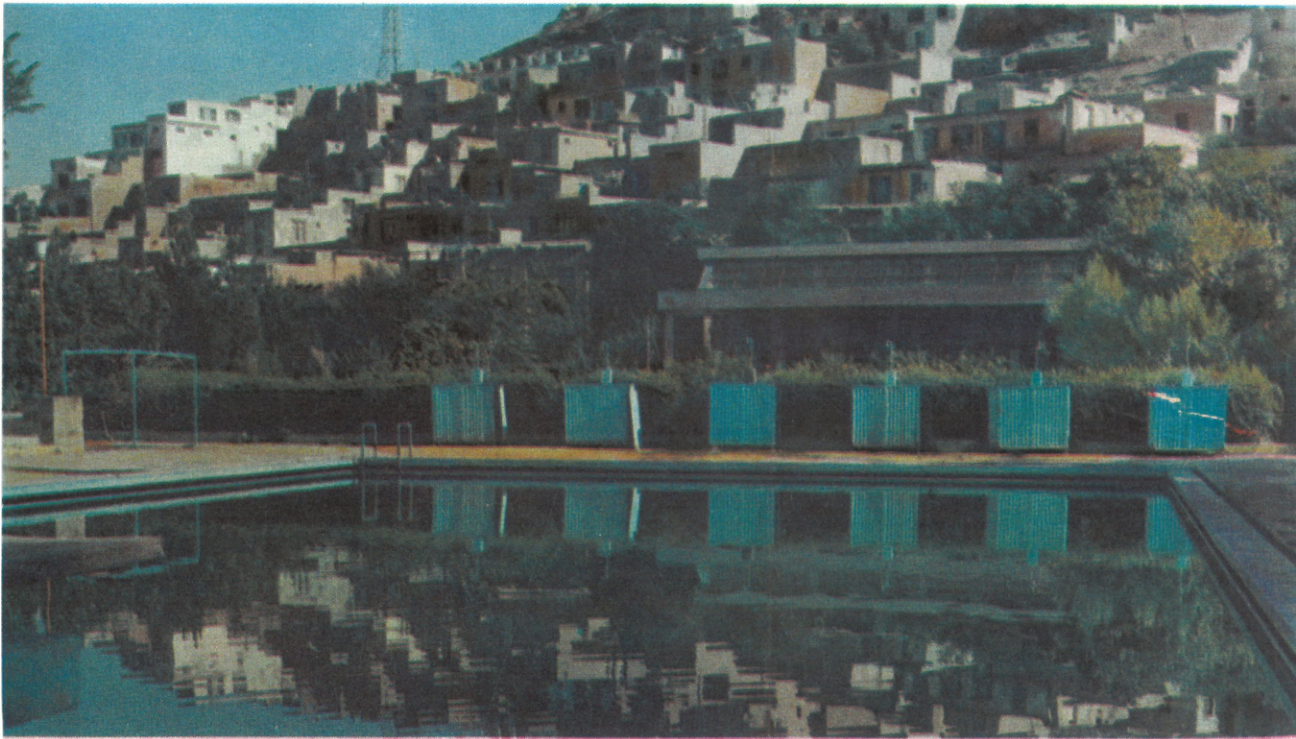
But soon this impression fades as one roams around the alleys, terraces, swimming pools under the cool shade of its majestic trees. Another unique sensation visitors get from Bagh-i-Babur is that it is not only a beautiful place to see but also a place from where you could see other gardens along the Logar River all the way to the foothills of the Hindukush mountains in Paghman.

Visiting the graveyard of Zahir-uddin Mohammad Babur on the upper terrace of the garden one finds the answer why Babur, the founder of the Moghul Empire in India wished to be buried in this garden in Kabul.

Amazingly the most prominent chronicles depicting the story of Bagh-i-Babur is *Tuzuk-i-Babury* (or *Babur Namah*), a book written by Emperor Babur himself. In this book, Babur explicitly describes how much he was fascinated by Kabul, its nature, its people and plants, fruits and climate, and the reason behind creation of this and other gardens in Kabul.

Being a talented general and writer, ardent hunter and poet, a person who equally loved the sound of sabre rattling and clinking of glasses at feasts, Babur left a simple and unpretentious description of his time as well as mores and customs of the peoples of those countries he visited or conquered. For example, his descriptions of Kabul and Kabulistan, the country, with which he associated his first victories and his impetuous flight at the peaks of fame, are of great interest till nowadays.

"The region of Kabul," he writes in *Babur Namah*, "stretches from east to west. Along its edges and borders there are all mountains at the foot of



The Upper
Swimming
Pool of
Bagh-i-Babur

which water ditches flow. In summer, in Kabul often blows a northern wind, called *parwan*." At that time, Kabulistan occupied a favourable intermediary position between India and Persia and was engaged in successful international trade. According to Babur, every year, up to ten thousand horses were herded to Kabul from India, as well as up to twenty thousand oxen; merchants also brought there cloths, sweets, sugar cane, medicinal herbs. He wrote that in Kabul, one could find goods from Persia, Iraq, China and India.

According to princess Gulbadan Begum, Babur's daughter, when her father was dividing his territory among his sons he earmarked Kabul for himself.

Babur devoted keen attention to rehabilitation of specially those areas of Kabul which had been destroyed during the invasion of his forefather Ghenghiz Khan. The creation of Bagh-i-Babur and several others in Kabul served the same purpose.

According to M. Qassim Fereshta, Bagh-i-Babur is 500 metres long from the bank of the Logar River towards Sherdarwaza mountain, and consists of 15 levels or terraces. Each level is extended up to 30 metres. On the upper level there lies the royal graveyard where Babur and a number of the members of his family are buried. Beside the graveyard, there is the Marble Mosque built during Shah Jehan, costing 30,000 Rupees. Down, towards the lower levels lie the old and new swimming pools, 12 water falls, and the magnificent collection of trees, plants and flowers — all

beautifully connected by a network of sidewalks.

During the reign of Amir Abdurrahman in the late 19th century, a palace was also built which is called the Queen's Palace.

Composed on a geometrical pattern on sloping ground Bagh-i-Babur is facing Char-dih plain towards the snow-covered Paghman mountain where challenging gardens were built in the reign of King Amanullah (1919—1929).

The fresh and cool air of Bagh-i-Babur along with sweet smelling herbs, colourful flowers, and fragrant scent dominating some of the prettiest plants, trees and green lawns mysteriously take away from visitors any concern about time, giving them only one alternative, i.e. to enjoy the present.

This applies to all the gardens built in the Moghul style giving space for people to add to the beauty of nature.

During the reign of Babur, a number of gardens and public parks were also built in Jalalabad, Charikar and Kandahar cities of Afghanistan. The *Safa wa Wafa* gardens built in 1508 still have kept their beauty and are visited by thousands of people, especially on weekends and vacations.

The Moghul gardens of Jalalabad are characterized by their citrus fruit trees while the gardens of Kabul are full of apple, cherry and poplar trees.

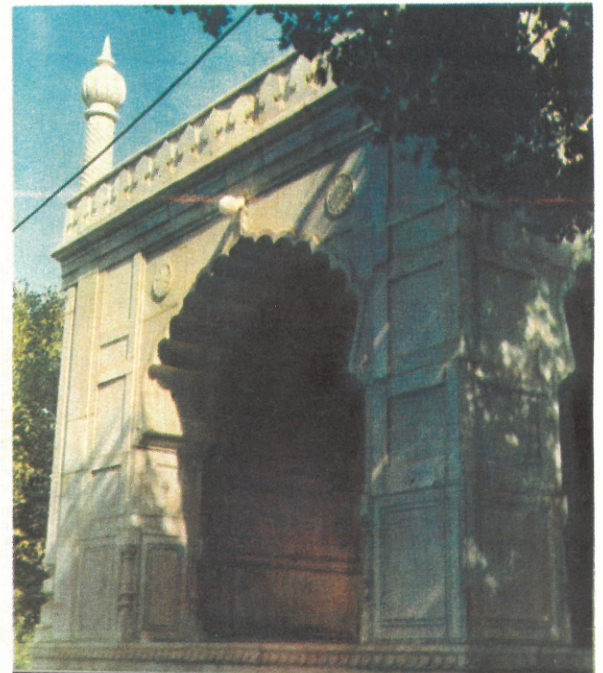
In Charikar, the centre of Parwan province, located to the north of Kabul, on Babur's order a long picnic known as *Gulghundi* (Flower Mound). This picnic ground includes several hills covered with *arghawan* (redbud)

trees which have purple blossoms in spring.

Chelzina (40 ladders) carved from the rocks of a nearby mountain, west of Kandahar city, is another landmark built during Babur's reign. It took 80 masons 3 years to hew the 40 stairs in hard rocks and make an ever lasting landmark in Kandahar. *Charbagh* (Four Gardens), the most prominent public park in Kandahar was also laid during Babur's time. This garden is predominantly covered by pomegranate trees and, therefore, is called also as *Anar Bagh* (Pomegranate Garden).

YUSUFZAI

The Marble
Mosque



BUSINESS

Flowers: Pleasant Trade

It is summer time in Afghanistan and Kabul's main thoroughfare of Turabaz Khan acquires new character as the flower shops come to life in a blaze of colour. There are only three shops here, each near the other, but they at once arrest the eye as purple zinnias, cream gladioli, mauve roses and blood-red carnations vie with each other for attention in full redolence.

These flower shops have their own charm and flavour, and are successful as much because of the Afghans' natural love for flowers, as on account of business acumen. It is a good business, say all the three shopowners, made better by the fact that they are dealing in a commodity so pleasant and soothing that they are enriched in the process. It is strange though that not a single woman is associated with the profession.

Mohammed Azar Bahar, who is latest arrival on the scene, started his shop just three years ago. The other two had been already established, one as long back as 20 years ago, he recalls. But there was no resentment then or now. "In fact, I have added to the spirit of healthy competition," he says. Azar is a specialist, because in his shop one sees flowers arranged in separate bouquets according to variety, quality and colour.

Summer is the best season for flowers, says Azar, because nature is at this time most plentiful. This is the season when the weather is clement,



and the flower-growers in commercial gardens in Paghman, Chardeh, Baraki, Sharara bring their flowers to Kabul personally, either in their own cars or in hired taxis. Azar has six suppliers from these places, with whom he has established a good working relationship. His stock with them is good, mainly because he is ethical about his business. He pays them immediately and also pays for flowers he has ordered but which are damaged en route. "I am morally bound to do so," he explains. And thus the system of demand and supply works. "Every day I give my order for various flowers. Demand varies, like during the wedding season, or during weekends, it is much higher." And in winter, when most of the country is too cold for flowers to grow, he has

special brokers in sunny Jalalabad, south of Kabul, who keep him supplied with roses, phlox and gladioli from the lush gardens there.

Pricing is done according to the quality of flowers, the most valuable being roses. In summer each rose is bought by the shopkeeper for 10 Afghanis, and sold for 20 to 30 Afghanis a piece, depending on its size and quality. In winter of course the price doubles. This is not only because of the inclement weather, but because taxi charges are higher, procurement is more difficult, and even the rate of spoilage is higher. But people want their flowers both in summer and winter, and are willing to pay the price.

Abdul Khalil, who owns another shop which he started 20 years ago, represents a new generation of multi-occupational people: he is also a teacher of law at Kabul University. Like Azar, Khalil also employs four boys who help in running the establishment. They clean the shop, cook lunch, tend the flowers and arrange bouquets. They are paid a daily wage of 200 Afghanis with lunch — the high wage keeps their interest in the job alive. But Khalil's approach to display is different. Unlike Azar he chooses to arrange his flowers in a heterogeneous mix, not according to variety. Thus there are the usual phlox, gladioli, roses, asters all grouped together. The effect is pleasing, but the sense of artistry one gets in the former shop is somehow missing. However Khalil is the only one to stock golden yellow marigolds, and their heady pungent smell permeates the shop. They are very popular with Indians for use in wedding garlands, he tells us, are grown in Kabul province, and are good business in themselves because of the large Indian



Bahar flower shop

population in Kabul. But the supply is limited only to July and August, the two hottest months. He also has a large variety of artistically made paper flowers, produced by women at home and purchased by him at 13 Afghanis a piece and sold at 20. His boys also make some paper flowers in the shop itself, having been trained in the art earlier. It is useful, and good source of colour in winter, says Khalil. And many people prefer paper flowers to the fresh ones because they are more lasting and give better value for money. Khalil tells us phlox come from Paghman, gladioli, roses, carnations from Kabul. The top favourite remains the rose and carnation, the former for its beauty, the latter for its fragrance.

The third shop belonging to **Abdul Sattar** is different from the others because it is purely a family business involving two nephews and a son. Like the other shops, here, too, is cool and pleasant, one of the boys cascading water on the floor every two or three hours. "We do that to keep the temperature down, so that the flowers last longer. We also change the water frequently," he says. His clusters, too, like Khalil's are arranged in a heterogeneous mix, and like the other florists, he, too, has his special tried and tested suppliers with whom he has worked out a practical relationship based on mutual trust and goodwill. But Abdul Sattar has special plans for the future, and wants to import flowers twice a week by air from India.

It is indeed a refreshing experience to visit the three shops and talk to the men who make them run. They are candid about their problems. All complain of high rental and tax, heavy electricity and water consumption, for which they pay extra. Azar, for instance, says he buys 15 bags of water a day for 20 Afghanis each. It would be convenient they all agree, if they had separate water taps inside the shops. They also feel the need for coolers, and Azar certainly intends to invest in one.

Yes, it is a good business they all agree, despite the costs, the lean season, despite the fact that supply of flowers is not as high as it could be because many gardens have been destroyed in the war. It is also rewarding as an experience, because it keeps them in touch with men and nature. While each of these men have their own aspirations for future expansion and diversification, they admit it will depend much on future circumstances, both individual and national. On the former front plans will depend on the ability to procure working capital, on the latter, on cessation of fighting. This, they all agree, would give the greatest fill up to their business.

R. R.



A bouquet of gladioli



Artificial flowers





EDUCATION

Competent Youth

One of the prime objectives of higher education in Afghanistan is to help growth of competencies of young cadres and their specialization in certain areas of art and sciences.

Quite often talented boys and girls cannot complete their education because of financial difficulties. While some manage to resume their higher education some years later, the majority are forced to take up jobs in order to earn a living after finishing high school.

In order to help competent youth coming from low-income families and, at the same time, stimulate higher standards of academic performance, in 1985 a special programme was worked out for rendering financial aid to outstanding students through a joint venture of Kabul University and the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan.

Shahla Feraidoon, a senior student of the Faculty of Construction, and Amanullah Feraidoon, a senior student of the Faculty of Geology and Mines of the Polytechnic Institute, are two competent students who have been receiving 1,500 Afs. as stipend per month for the last 3 years under this scheme.

When asked to tell us of his other interests besides studies, Amanullah said, "I am the Secretary of the Youth Primary Organization of our faculty and head of the Association of Top Students in our institute."

Amanullah believes that young people should love their homeland, cherish high sentiments of humanism, and have boundless love for work and creativity.

Answering a question whether she has faced any problems in the course of her education, Shahla, Amanullah's sister said, "Life is full of ups and downs. And I am no exception. But I believe that my own firm resolve and perseverance as well as timely support of the family have helped me overcome problems."

Both Amanullah and Shahla believe that to overcome the losses and heal the wounds our people have suffered during the 10 years of the undeclared war, peace and tranquillity are the prime necessities of the time.

These youngsters are of the conviction that it seems difficult at the first stage to predict the future of the country. "But we can state with optimism that once peace is established in the country, our people will be able to lead a prosperous life."



Shahla and Amanullah

However, even under the conditions of war, young people think of their future and plan a private life of their own. Expressing his opinion about marriage, Amanullah says, "Marriage is like an almond. Unless you have tasted it you don't know whether it is sweet or bitter."

"I believe that in marriage, the views and experience of the parents should be taken into consideration, but the agreement and understanding between the couple, to my mind, is a vital factor," Shahla said amicably.

Asked if they have any message for the country's youth Shahla pointed out, "We call upon all the youth at home and abroad not to remain indifferent to the need for peace both at regional and international levels. Certainly the youth movement throughout the world has played a considerable role in curbing the unbridled arms race, especially the nuclear one. It is

today's young generation who would live most of the 21st century and we should be concerned about the conditions of the century which belongs to us and to our children."

Adding to Shahla's comments Amanullah takes the lead and states, "Ten years ago a pall of pessimism hovered over all people, especially the youth, however, the peace efforts of the USSR and the USA and the meetings of Soviet-American leaders in Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington and Moscow have opened up new vistas for the year 2,000 and we can nurture new hopes for the next century."

"I hope the Middle East problems, the Iran-Iraq war and the Afghanistan problem which have vastly hampered peace and progress in our continent be tackled through peaceful negotiations rather than revenge seeking and hegemonistic rivalries."

Farid



At Kabul Polytechnic



Happy New
Year
(Afghanistan
Today)

